

A photograph of a group of children walking outdoors, likely on a school bus or during a field trip. The children are wearing backpacks and jackets. An adult woman with red hair, wearing a patterned jacket, is walking alongside them, looking towards the children. The background shows a fence and some trees. The image has a purple and blue color overlay.

Impact Report 2015-2016

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BOYS VERSUS GIRLS: WE ADDRESS THE THEORY!

We disconnect family disadvantage from educational disadvantage. We believe all children have the Right to Read. In this Impact Report we can also reveal how we challenge the perception that boys underachieve in relation to girls. We have some interesting evidence!

Read on to find out more...

FOREWORD

THE IMPACT OF BUTTERFLY EFFECTIVENESS...

Why do we have children leaving our schools with low, or worse, non-existent levels of literacy? Why do we have children in our schools, both primary and secondary, who cannot read? Most importantly, how can we remedy this quickly and efficiently? The answer is with the [Butterfly Method](#) of teaching, which has demonstrated, consistently, for more than seventeen years, that virtually all children can be swiftly taught to read.

Moreover, after fourteen hours of teaching with the Butterfly method as part of the Butterfly In-Schools Programme, literacy-needy children who were labelled “Special Educational Needs” or “English as an Additional Language”, or those with family disadvantage for whom the label ‘Free School Meals’ was applied, all outperformed their peers.

I have been a teacher and Trustee of Real Action for some years now, and have been privileged to see first-hand the extraordinary improvement the children make in a short period of time, and the confidence that comes with it.

A child who starts to engage in class because they have learned to read is the genesis of a young, curious and

empowered mind.

I made a film about the Butterfly Method, starring some of these hilarious and wonderful children. It is only short, so please watch and be prepared to be smitten, as I am, with this charity, its children and all the volunteers and teachers who are working to spread The Butterfly Effect (<http://bit.ly/2cuiZzG>).



Rachael Stirling
Actress and Trustee

OUR VISION

THE RIGHT TO READ, THE RIGHT TO KNOW...

No child, of any background, should be educationally doomed. Every child - even from the most deprived or difficult family, the most challenging neighbourhood, or just on the brink of speaking English - is entitled to the knowledge that comes from subject teaching. And what underpins all this? **Mastery of literacy**. Children - no matter how many 'disadvantage' labels they attract - can be taught - swiftly, animatedly and gratifyingly - to read. Rachael Stirling is right.

So this is what we do. We target literacy-needy children from the most challenging backgrounds. And we teach them, speedily and enjoyably, to read

in our ordered classes. We do it at our three term-time two-hour Butterfly Saturday schools. And we do it for pupils in primary and secondary schools. Not only do we make sure, by using the Butterfly programme, that they quickly become independent readers of 'chapter books' - which they love. We also ensure that we account for all this. We keep records. At any stage in our operations we can tell the world about our Butterfly literacy impact.

Read on. Our Project Director, Jemma Pym, now presents our Impact Report for 2015-2016. It's impressive. It demonstrates how we realise **OUR VISION**.



Katie Ivens
Education Director

INTRODUCTION

Our mission is to demonstrate that social and economic disadvantage need not result in educational disadvantage.

Real Action is an innovative and ambitious educational charity. We are pioneers of powerful educational programmes that can dramatically transform the lives of children and adults from disadvantaged communities.

From our humble beginnings we have gone from strength to strength. Founded by Katie Ivens and Roger Diamond in 1998, Real Action responded to calls from the Mozart Estate community who demanded 'Real Action' to deal with illiterate child gangs who roamed the Mozart Estate.

The first Butterfly Saturday Reading School on the Mozart Estate was set up to address this in 1999. The Mozart Estate continues to have the highest level of child deprivation in the country. We now have three Butterfly Saturday Reading Schools, serving disadvantaged communities that span the west London zone. Our Butterfly graduates tend to go to university; they don't do street-life.

We demonstrate that all children - even the disadvantaged - can be taught to read. We don't doom any child to educational failure. In this report we are pleased to be able to share with you the difference we have made during the academic year 2015-2016 for around 500 children. Our Butterfly Reading Programme has a demonstrable and measurable impact. We have the solution to tackle educational disadvantage. [Read on to find out more!](#)



WHAT WE DO

Real Action is the literacy charity that provides Butterfly Reading Programmes for children from disadvantaged communities in London.

We now run three Butterfly Saturday Reading Schools which, since 1999, have taught over 4,000 children how to read. Our Butterfly Saturday Reading Schools are taught by dedicated volunteers.

We also work directly with primary and secondary schools to deliver our Butterfly In-School Programme during the school day. Since 2012 we have worked with 194 pupils in 7 secondary schools and 533 pupils in 11 primary schools.

We also deliver our English Express classes which give adults, who would not normally be able to afford to study English, the opportunity to learn English quickly and cheaply. The small fees charged for these classes help to sustain our charitable work.



PORTOBELLO Butterfly Saturday Reading School

Address: Rugby Portobello Trust, 221 Walmer Road, W11 4EY

Time: 10am - 12pm



QUEEN'S PARK Butterfly Saturday Reading School

Address: Queen's Park Primary School, Droop Street, W10 4DQ

Time: 10am - 12pm



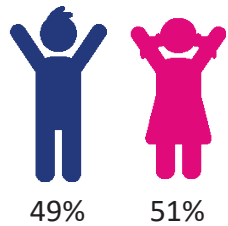
COLVILLE Butterfly Saturday Reading School

Address: Colville Primary School, Lonsdale Road, W11 2DF

Time: 10am - 12pm

OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK FOR 2015-2016

We taught around **400 children** at our **BUTTERFLY SATURDAY READING SCHOOLS** in north Westminster and north Kensington.



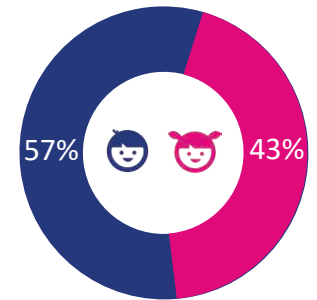
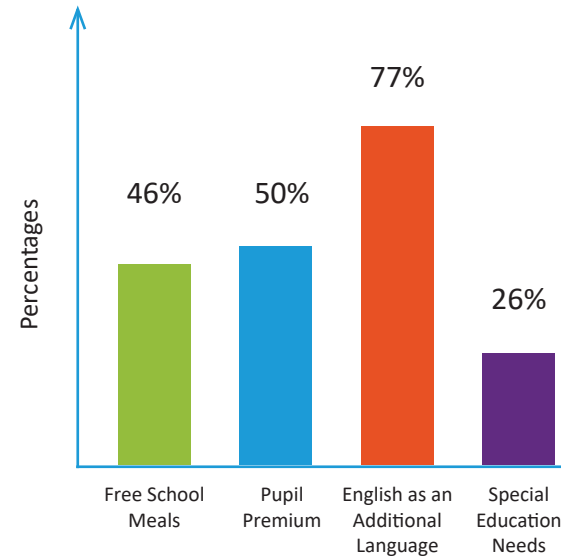
Result: An average **10 months'** progress in reading age in an average **21 hours'** Butterfly teaching.



85 volunteers were recruited, trained and attended our Saturday Schools.

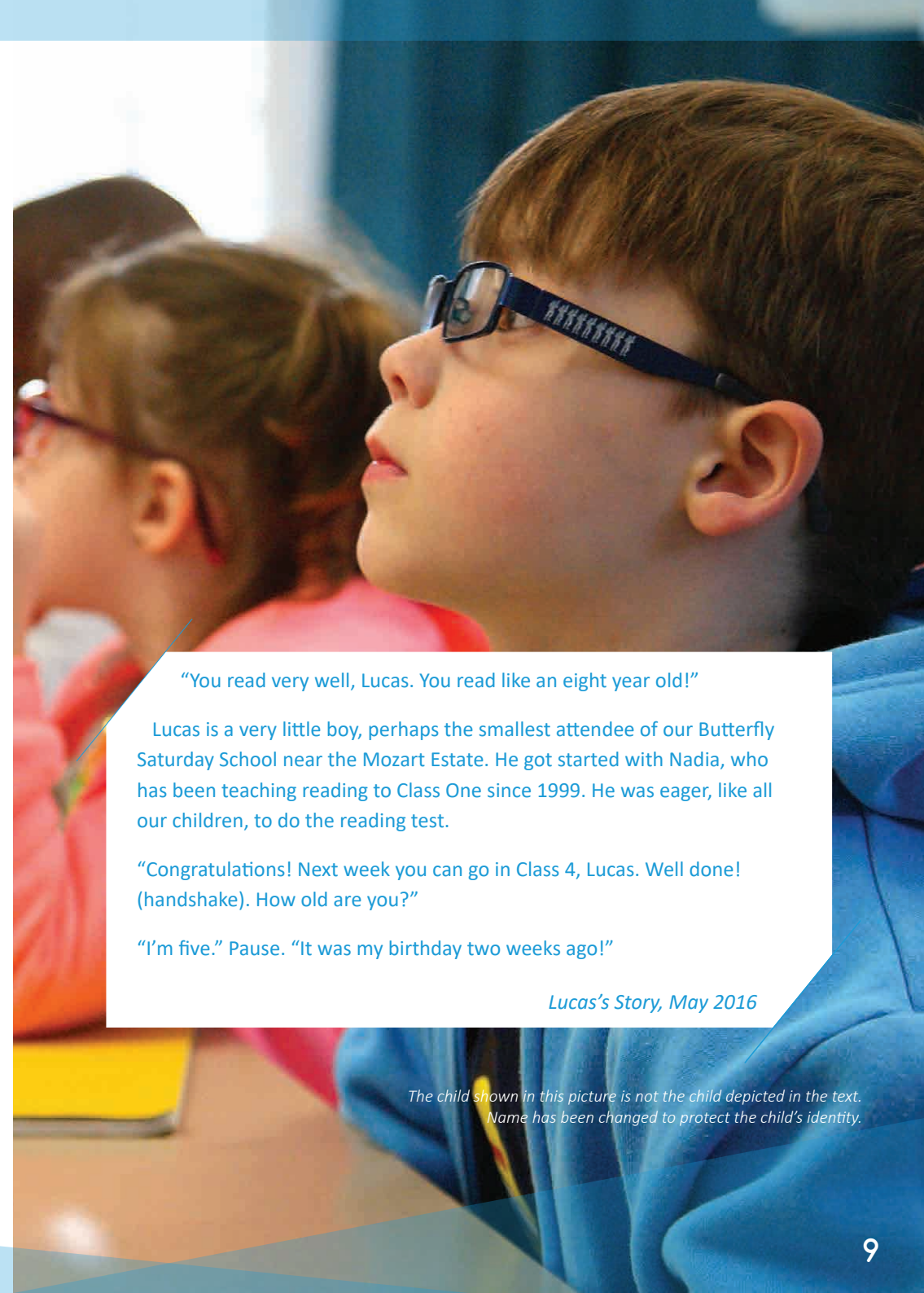
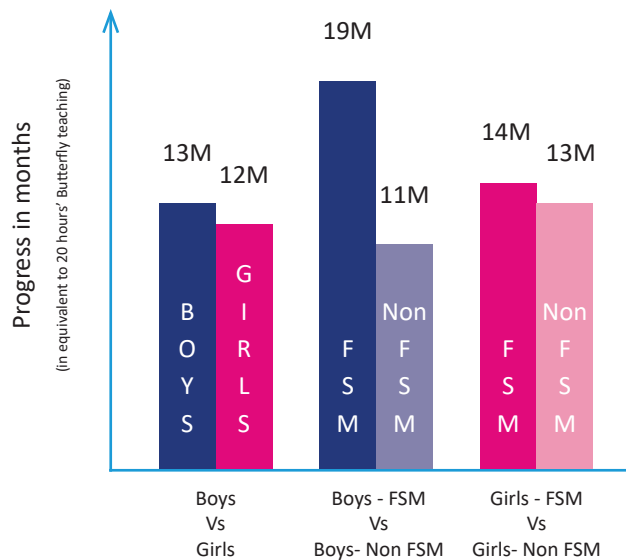
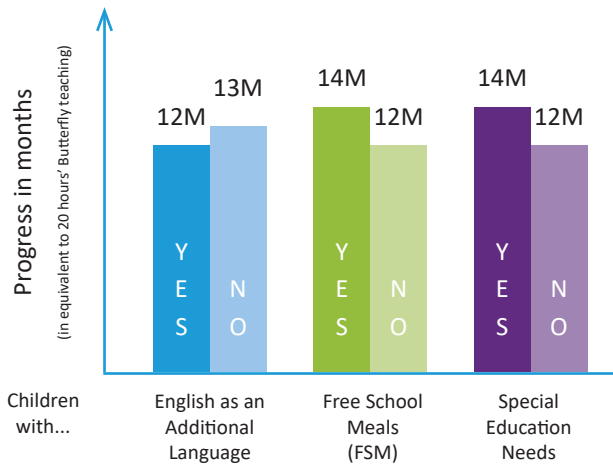
We ran **6 training sessions** for volunteers and teachers.

On our **BUTTERFLY IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMME** we taught **115 children** in three primary schools and one secondary school.



Result: After **14 hours'** Butterfly teaching the pupils' reading ages had progressed by an average **9 months.**

OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK FOR 2015-2016 (CONTINUED...)



“You read very well, Lucas. You read like an eight year old!”

Lucas is a very little boy, perhaps the smallest attendee of our Butterfly Saturday School near the Mozart Estate. He got started with Nadia, who has been teaching reading to Class One since 1999. He was eager, like all our children, to do the reading test.

“Congratulations! Next week you can go in Class 4, Lucas. Well done! (handshake). How old are you?”

“I’m five.” Pause. “It was my birthday two weeks ago!”

Lucas’s Story, May 2016

The child shown in this picture is not the child depicted in the text. Name has been changed to protect the child’s identity.



WHAT IS BUTTERFLY READING?

The Butterfly Reading Programme was written by the distinguished educationalist Irina Tyk. The classes are structured and fast-paced. The programme consists firstly of the Butterfly Book, which is a pacy, scripted synthetic phonics course aimed at children with reading ages of 0 - 8 years old. Once children have reading ages 8+ they move on to the Butterfly Grammar Book and then with reading ages 9+ on to the Junior Butterfly Reader designed to ensure children improve their reading fluency, comprehension and grammar and vocabulary. Some of the questions it poses offer a way in to critical thinking.

Evaluation is at the heart of everything we do. We pre-test each child. This gives

us an initial reading age. We place them in classes based on their reading levels. Then we post-test the children after x number of hours' Butterfly teaching. We calculate each child's reading progress in relation to the number of hours' Butterfly teaching received, by subtracting reading age 1 from reading age 2. We then calculate the average result.

Our norm is an average 12 months' reading age advance in an average 20 hours' Butterfly teaching.



Shakeera, aged five, could not read at all. This is not normally a problem. But she had been struggling when she came to us. She had been taken out of her normal class at school to address her possible special educational needs. She had found this very traumatic. Her mother was worried about her, and had brought her to our newly formed Colville Butterfly Saturday School.

We pre-tested her. She was unable to read. After ten hours of our pacy, scripted Butterfly whole-class teaching we post-tested her. She was reading like a six year old.

Shakeera was delighted. So was her mother. She told us she had been taken out of the special classes at her school. And her confidence had really grown.

Shakeera's Story, May 2016



The child shown in this picture is not the child depicted in the text. Name has been changed to protect the child's identity.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: THE PROBLEM

UK 15-year-olds were ranked in 2013 at No. 23 among developed nations for their literacy levels.¹ Children from Britain's poorest communities are the most at risk of educational failure. This can be devastating for their future lives. The UK has the strongest link among developed nations between poor literacy and unemployment, and evidence

suggests that young people who are not in education, employment or training are 20 times more likely to be convicted of a crime.² We are also informed that 46% of prison entrants arrive with literacy skills below those of 12-year-olds. This is three times more than the 15% of people with similar skills levels in the adult population generally.³

The Mozart Estate in north Westminster (where Real Action and the Queen's Park Saturday Butterfly School are based) has the highest level of child deprivation in the country. White City ranks at 45 and north Kensington as a whole ranks at 1,717. These areas are served by our Portobello and Colville Saturday Butterfly schools.⁴

60% of pupils with a Special Educational Need are not reading well by the age of 11, compared to 25% of children not recognised as having a Special Educational Need.⁵

Two in five poorer children leave primary education without reading well.⁵

The reading gap between boys and girls in England is one of the widest in the developed world: boys are twice as likely to fall below even a very basic reading level.⁵

60% of children in the lowest reading attainment groups at age 10 had parents with low literacy levels.

6-year old Salome has been learning grammar as well as literacy. Asked to read for us from our literacy test, she read a longish sentence then – dramatically – stopped. She asked if the dot meant that she had to breathe now. She continued to read, stopping to breathe, dramatically, at every full stop.

Salome's Story, June 2016



The child shown in this picture is not the child depicted in the text. Name has been changed to protect the child's identity.

1. OECD PISA report, 2013.

2. Get On, Read On, Save the Children 2014.

3. OLASS English and Maths Assessments 2014-15 published by Skills Assessment Agency.

4. IDACI 2015.

5. Moss, Gemma and Liz Washbrook, Understanding the Gender Gap in Literacy and Language Development, University of Bristol, 2016.

OUR IMPACT: THE SOLUTION

We work with children from some of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK and who are among those deemed most at risk of educational failure. YET -

Across our three Butterfly Saturday Schools in the academic year 2015-2016 children made an average 10 months' progress in reading age in an average 21 hours' Butterfly teaching. Not bad.

"I have REALLY enjoyed the experience of helping the children read and write and will treasure it forever! I think that the work you're doing is so important and I will definitely tell other people about the great things you are doing."

Portobello Volunteer

On our Butterfly In-School Intervention Programme children did even better. After 14 hours' Butterfly teaching the pupils' reading ages had progressed by an average 9 months.

And, despite the national statistics which show how children on Free School Meals, boys, and children with Special Educational Needs are falling dramatically behind their peers with their reading, on our Butterfly In-School Intervention Programme we found that:

- Children with the 'disadvantaged' labels Free School Meals (used to indicate poverty and family disadvantage), English as an Additional Language and Special Educational Needs all outperformed their non-'disadvantaged' peers;
- Boys outperformed girls;
- Boys on Free School Meals outperformed boys not on Free School Meals;
- Boys on Free School Meals made the equivalent of one month's progress in reading age for every hour they were taught by the Butterfly method.

(See page 8...)

We seem to have the solution to many of the UK's literacy problems. Our structured and fast paced Butterfly classes ensure that even children from the most deprived backgrounds learn to read quickly, with results that will last them a lifetime.



AHMED'S STORY

April 2016

Ahmed's good work is rewarded with a sticker. He runs through the corridor at school shouting 'I've just got a sticker for my work!'

May 2016

Ahmed still struggles with his behaviour and his attendance is erratic. He still spends a lot of time in 'exclusion'. However the teacher finds when he does attend that he participates well in her class and his reading is improving.

February 2016

"I don't know why I am here. I am really good at reading. I don't want to come."

Ahmed is almost 12 years old. He attends a local secondary school and has been identified as needing help with his literacy. He is labelled as in receipt of Free School Meals and has English as an Additional Language. Our pre-testing shows that Ahmed has a reading age of a 9 ½ year old. He is hostile and often attends the class for 5 minutes before walking out. His behaviour seems to be out of control and he spends many days in the school's 'exclusion room'.

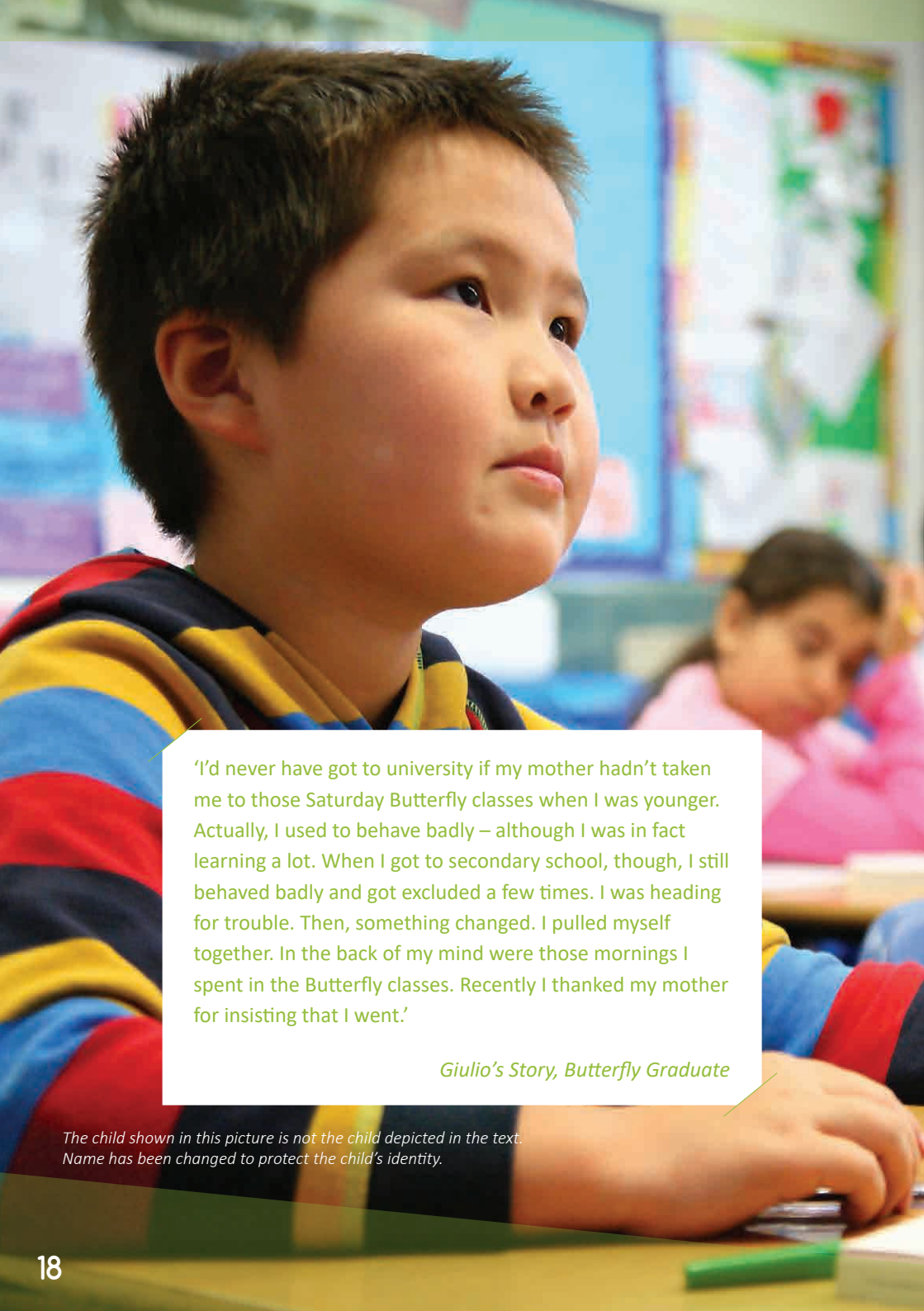
March 2016

After a lot of persuading Ahmed starts to attend his classes with more frequency. His teacher realises that Ahmed is very intelligent. She gets him to contribute in the classes and encourages his participation. His attendance begins to improve, as does his behaviour.

July 2016

Ahmed is given a post-test. Although he is reluctant to do so he eventually completes it. Although Ahmed only attended his classes for 8 hours the post-test shows that he has a reading age of 13 years. He is now 12 years old. He is ahead with his reading. We are waiting to see if his behaviour improves and he spends less time in 'exclusion'... Perhaps he will not be heading for criminality. Fingers crossed.

The child shown in this picture is not the child depicted in the text. Name has been changed to protect the child's identity.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

We are delighted to be working in partnership with Colville Primary School which hosts our third Butterfly Saturday Reading School. Funded by generous Chepstow House School parents in Notting Hill, who kindly raised over £50k, this school opened in November 2015. 110 children enrolled for our classes. We recruited and trained over 30 volunteers in this academic year to teach and provide support at this new school.

After an average of 18 hours of our Butterfly teaching the children at the Colville Butterfly Saturday School improved by an average of 10 months.

"I find the Butterfly method interesting. The most enjoyable thing is when children get how to blend the sounds. They quite often struggle with blending of the sounds but when they get it, it is a real light bulb moment and everything just clicks."

Colville Volunteer

Our work in a local secondary school was made possible by a new partnership with the West London Zone. The charity supports organisations by getting them to work together to help children living in the west London zone get the support they need.

This year we taught 13 pupils in year 7 who were identified by the West London Zone as needing literacy support. All 13 pupils had reading ages below 11 years old; some of them had reading ages of a 7 ½ year-old. On average their initial reading ages were 36 months behind their chronological ages when they started on our Butterfly programme. After an average of 15 hours of our Butterfly teaching their reading age deficits were reduced by an average 13 months. This was an outstanding result: our teaching yielded nearly a one-month-per-teaching-hour average advance.

We hope that in the next academic year our partnership with the West London Zone will allow us to work in further secondary schools in the local area.

'I'd never have got to university if my mother hadn't taken me to those Saturday Butterfly classes when I was younger. Actually, I used to behave badly – although I was in fact learning a lot. When I got to secondary school, though, I still behaved badly and got excluded a few times. I was heading for trouble. Then, something changed. I pulled myself together. In the back of my mind were those mornings I spent in the Butterfly classes. Recently I thanked my mother for insisting that I went.'

Giulio's Story, Butterfly Graduate

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In April 2016 we delivered a pilot programme to 18 year 6 pupils at a local primary school. The programme focused on the delivery of Butterfly grammar classes. It provided us with the opportunity to deliver aspects of our new Butterfly Highflyers Programme of Study which incorporates reading fluency with vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and comprehension. The demands of the new national curriculum have increased the need in many schools for extra support with vocabulary and grammar. Our pilot programme

responded to these needs in one local primary school. Although we were unable to measure the impact of the programme on improving the children's grammar levels we were able to measure its success in relation to the pupils' views and comments.

In a survey conducted at the end of the pilot programme 85% of pupils said that they thought that their grammar had improved because of the Butterfly Grammar classes and 92% said that they found the teaching in the classes helpful.

"One teacher has spoken to me today about an exercise he was doing in his class and the only child who could answer correctly was one who had worked with you. When the child explained how he knew he said it was because of Butterfly club's help!"

Head of Literacy at a local primary school

'I was only 4 when I joined the Butterfly classes, in 1999. I was nervous at first, but I got my cousins to come the following week. We all loved it. I believe I got a headstart. I attended the Butterfly classes for 7 years! I got into reading English literature early. And I got an English A level. I'm now studying psychology at university. I'm looking for a career in marketing or recruitment.'

Yolanda's Story, Butterfly Graduate

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OUR ACCOUNTABILITY

Where did your money go?*

*Average between 2012 - 2016

87p

Direct charitable activities



3p

On governance and other costs

6p

To raise the next £1

4p

Reserves

Direct charitable activities include:

- Teaching children from disadvantaged background to read and write
- Recruiting and training volunteers and Butterfly practitioners
- Spreading and sharing our unique Butterfly teaching, and more!

OUR TARGETS FOR 2016-2017

Academic year 2016-2017 is going to be a challenging and exciting period for Real Action as we are now embarking on the first year of a 3-year Butterfly Highflyers Programme.

Butterfly Highflyers aims to further spread and share Butterfly teaching beyond our current beneficiaries' locations of north Westminster, north Kensington, and south Brent to other boroughs such as Camden and Hammersmith and Fulham.

Here is the annual breakdown for the 3-year Butterfly Highflyers budget:

- Year 1: £263K
- Year 2: £278K
- Year 3: £308K

As of September 2016, we have so far secured 50% of the required funds for year 1. More funds are needed to ensure that we are able to complete what we set out to do:

Delivering 3 Butterfly In-School programmes in 3 local primary schools benefitting around 135 literacy-needy pupils, which are estimated to cost £12K per school.

Developing our Butterfly resources, including a Butterfly training film, and a Butterfly grammar and comprehension curriculum.

Maintaining our 3 Butterfly Saturday Reading Schools serving around 400 local disadvantaged children annually at the cost of £86K per year.

Developing and growing the Butterfly Network of schools, teachers, and volunteers.

Hosting a Butterfly reading workshop for parents to ensure that the Butterfly children will receive the maximum benefit from Butterfly teaching both in school and at home.

WHAT NOW?

The 'BUTTERFLY EFFECT' needs to spread. There is said to be a 'crisis of literacy' in the UK but there need not be. Reading is not hard and Real Action has proved in this report that they have the approach to solve the 'crisis' of reading. The ability to read is the foundation for knowledge and understanding, and teacher trainers need to hear about and adopt the Butterfly Reading approach. Katie Ivens is a regular speaker to our trainee teachers at the University of Derby and she and her colleagues welcome invitations to speak anywhere in the UK and internationally.

Don't give up on children labelled 'disadvantaged' or 'SEND' (Special Educational Needs or Disability).

Find out what Real Action on reading means.



Professor Dennis Hayes
University of Derby

& Author of
"It's Teaching Not Therapy!"

Please support us by donating your time or money. To find out how you can help please contact us:

✉ admin@realaction.org.uk

☎ 020 8960 2065

🌐 www.realaction.org.uk

Thank you!

Our work would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers and our supporters.



All photographs in this report were taken by Olga Valebona (except the photos of Rachael Stirling and of Professor Dennis Hayes).

www.olgavalebona.com

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